

## CAFFEINE

Whether you are drinking a cup of coffee or tea, eating a chocolate bar, or sipping a soft drink, you are consuming a drug---caffeine. Along with alcohol and tobacco, caffeine is one of the most heavily consumed natural drugs in the world. Caffeine is a white powder that combines with acids to form a salt. Together with its close cousins, *theobromine* and *theophylline*, it is a natural part of coffee, tea, and cocoa. All of these *xanthines*, as they are called, have similar effects on the body in varying degrees. Theophylline is strong enough to find medical use against asthma; theobromine, found commonly in chocolate, is relatively mild.

Caffeine is a stimulant of the central nervous system, the heart, and respiration. It can increase blood pressure. The xanthines do have relaxing effects, but they are mild. Theophylline, which relaxes smooth muscles, including those in the gut, those around the bronchi, and the small muscles surrounding blood vessels, is the only one strong enough in this respect to be of any value. Caffeine is a diuretic. Although these effects are small when compared with other chemicals, caffeine is still commonly used in over-the-counter diuretics. Caffeine can cause nervousness and sleep problems.

### HOW DO YOU GET YOUR CAFFEINE

Coffee (5oz)	Instant	53 to 70 mg
	Percolated	110 mg
	Drip	146 mg
	Decaf	2 mg
Tea (5oz)	1 min brew	9 to 33 mg
	3 min brew	20 to 46 mg
	5 min brew	25 to 55 mg
	Herb	0 (depending on type)
Chocolate	Cocoa (5oz)	5 to 15 mg
	Chocolate Bar	6 to 25 mg
Soft Drinks (12 oz)	Mountain Dew	50 mg +
	Coke, Pepsi,	30mg +
	Dr. Pepper	
	7-UP, Sprite	0

Many over-the-counter drugs contain caffeine:

Stimulants	No-Doz, Vivarin	100 to 200 mg
Pain Relievers	Anacin, Excedrin	64 to 130 mg
Cold Relief	Dristan,	30 mg
	Triaminicin	
Weight Control	Dexatrim	200 to 300 mg

